



10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Rainbow Cities Network  
November 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 2022 – Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Minutes

## List of attendants

Aguilera, Flora	Barcelona
Bauwens, Steve	Ostend
Blondeel, Sabien	Ghent
Bonnemann, Susanne	Cologne
Brilleman, Babet	Bruges
Casasola, Chloé	Paris
Chicote, Florencio	Berlin
Collien, Dr. Isabel	Hamburg
Cubelic, Danijel	Heidelberg
David, Liselotte	Ostend
Dureux, Helene	Paris
Emmerich, Marius	Heidelberg
Halkilahti, Heidi	Helsinki
Hoste, Claire L'	Lille
Illgner, Johanna	Mannheim
Jacqmot, Danny	Brussels Capital Region
Jiang, Hai-Chay	Leuven
Kauer, Marianne	Bern
Kirkedal Nielsen, Anders	Aarhus
Kott, Izabella	Copenhagen
Kräh, Stefan	Wiesbaden
Landmann, Sören	Mannheim
Maidel, Fe	Sao Paulo
Mandicourt, Guillaume	Geneva
Morcamp Ferraille, Edouard	Lille
Moreau, Pierre-Alexandre	Tours
Mustajärvi, Tuija	Helsinki
Nessmann Bernsten, Tale	Bergen
O'Dowd, Siobhán	Cork
Peinz, Nicole	Frankfurt am Main
Pluijm, Marije	Rotterdam
Proch, Grace	Hanover
Rialhe, Leslie	Bordeaux
Rosas Vázquez, José Manuel	Rainbow Cities Network
Sàez Sellarès, Meritzel	Barcelona
Schocher, Nathan	Zürich
Sigurðardóttir, Svandís Anna	Reykjavik
Skinnerlien, Marte Stine	Oslo
Topolinjak, Simona	Ljubljana
Vanoverberghe, Joachim	Kortrijk
Vitali, Dominique	Esch-sur-Alzette
Wibmer, Florian	Vienna
Widell, Rasmus	Copenhagen
Wilhelm, Wolfgang	Vienna
Yeh, Ching- Sàez Sellarès yi	Taipei
Yuting, Chang	Taipei

Day 1 – Thursday, November 3<sup>th</sup>

Opening and welcome new members, introduction new members

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez, managing director at Rainbow Cities Network, opens the meeting and warmly welcomes the audience. Someone makes the minutes and an audio recording is made for this purpose. It is requested that if anyone wishes to make an intervention during the conference, they should mention their name and also the name of the city they are from. One vote per city applies. The name of the city someone is voting for must be mentioned while voting. If a delegation consists of more than one person, that delegation has only one vote. The delegation must choose who votes.

All attendants received an anniversary pin in their welcome bag. They are asked to wear them.

Juliane Steeger (Hanover) is the chair of the board. She is unfortunately unable to attend due to illness. She sends her regards and the message that she misses everybody. She wishes the attendants a very successful meeting.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez asks the audience for a big round of applause for the city of Rotterdam for hosting this year's annual meeting. He asks Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) to address the people who are present.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) promises to keep it short. People higher up in the organisation will officially welcome the attendants to this meeting later today. She welcomes everybody to this office. The location of the annual meeting is actually the place where the Rotterdam magic happens. She hopes the attendants will enjoy the meeting, that the meeting will be productive and that the attendants will also have an opportunity to visit the city. She wishes all attendants a good meeting.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez invites the deputy president, Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region), to come to the stage.

Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region) concludes that old and new member members are present. He is excited to see so many faces, some of them new. Some people he has gotten to know better over the past few years. Last month, there were 42 members. In the past year, 7 new members joined the Rainbow Cities Network. They will be inducted today. Another new member also joined last month. There are two more cities that will start the membership process in the near future.

He recalls his first conference in Barcelona four years ago. That does not seem so long ago. The task then was to start with a new independent and self-sustainable international organization. Now, four years later, it can be said that good work has been done. Shortly after the start, José Manuel Rosas Vázquez came on board as managing director. Since then, the network has grown slowly but surely. Among the things the attendants share are common projects and an exchange of best practices, such as Wolfgang Wilhelm's (Vienna) photo exhibition, the Sharing the Rainbow project and also the EU project. Some of the attendants participate in these. As the network grows and more and more cities from outside Europe join, it is also time to start new, exiting worldwide projects of interest to all members.

He thinks there are different topics on which information can be exchanged. These topics are the same all over the world. He mentions diversity in the community, intersexuality, anti-discrimination, safety security, visibility and inclusion like prides and last but not least international solidarity which is becoming more and more urgent in a climate of growing polarisation fuelled by, amongst others, the antigender movement.

It is necessary to take care of each other. Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region) hopes that at this annual meeting he can also welcome a number of new board members, eager to share their insights and experiences, to guide and unite the network in the coming years.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez points out that this year marks the network's 10th anniversary. That is quite an achievement. He asks the audience to applaud for themselves. This annual meeting marks the most diverse and international meeting in the network's history. He has been involved with the network for the last three years. He joined in 2020 at the start of the pandemic. The pandemic has had a big impact on our lives. Everyone has lost loved ones and everyone has had to deal with quarantine for almost a year to protect their own lives and the lives of more vulnerable people.

The LGBTI community has been particularly affected, as everybody knows from reports but also from experience. What he is trying to say is that when he started at the network, his chances were not very good. Nevertheless, the members were always there with their support, commitment and friendly advices. And all that support is paying off. Despite everything seeming to be against the network in 2020, the network has grown from 27 members to 43 today. It is expected that the network will grow even further. The network has gone beyond the borders of Europe towards Asia and North America. It is necessary to further professionalise the network. The website needs a makeover and there may be an international film. A contribution has been received from the European Commission to write the first LGBTI policy guidelines for local authorities. Barcelona and Cologne were involved in this.

Despite the fantastic last three years, today it is also visible how hatred affects the mental freedom of the LGBTI people. The freedom to sit in a classroom, the freedom to go to a bar, to march a parade without having to fear for people's lives. The freedom of who the members of the LGBTI community are, the freedom to love who they love. In response to these threats, the Rainbow Cities Network must continue to work together, support each other and build this network. The network is stronger than hate. Rainbow Cities Network stands for people's right to live free from discrimination, but also stands for the rights of people to participate equally in society.

This year's exhibition is dedicated to queer refugees. This touches José Manuel Rosas Vázquez because he is a migrant himself. It is important for migrants to give something back to the city that welcomed them. Today, the network has a message in particular for young queer refugee migrants. They are seen and heard. They are not alone. There are millions of people standing beside them.

As he said earlier today, the network continues to grow. Three new members are welcomed this year. They are present today. The city of Copenhagen is invited to the podium to receive the membership certificate. There is no chairman's signature on the certificate yet. The chairman could not be present today, so the certificate is taken back. The chairman will sign the certificate and then the certificate is sent to the new members by post. The city of Lille is asked to come to the stage and also receives a certificate. The city of Montreal is not represented today. Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) accepts the certificate on behalf of the city of Montreal. A photo is taken.

Puerto Rico also joined the Rainbow Cities Network this year, but this was quite shortly before the annual meeting. Therefore, Puerto Rico cannot attend today. They will also receive a certificate.

Last year, there was a similar process, but the new members have not physically met. Therefore, the city of Cork and the city of Taipei are asked to stand up. Representatives attending an annual meeting for the first time are also given the opportunity to introduce themselves. These are the representatives from Zurich, Helsinki, Hamburg, Oslo, Copenhagen, Frankfurt am Main, Leuven, Paris, Ostend, Barcelona.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Working session

### *Annual Report 2021-2022*

Everyone has received the annual report. Only one e-mail with comments and a question was received. The question will be addressed at working session 4. José Manuel Rosas Vázquez asks if there are any more questions. Probably not, because it was asked to be done prior to the annual meeting.

### *Approval of Annual Report*

Using a digital voting system, attendants indicate whether they agree with the annual report. This voting system is used several times during the annual meeting. José Manuel Rosas Vázquez stresses again that each city may only vote once. 34 cities are present. 33 cities voted in favour of the annual report. One city did not vote. There is sufficient quorum for decision-making. With that, the annual report 2021 is approved.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Working session

### *Workshop 'What is the role of the city as an RCN member?'*

Guillaume Mandicourt explains working session 2. This session discusses what it means to be a member of the Rainbow Cities Network. The proposal is to use three questions as a starting point. However, this is not mandatory. Everyone will have the opportunity to raise other topics. The three questions are:

- What do you expect as a member from the network?
- What can you bring to the network as a member
- According to you what are the main goals the Rainbow Cities Network should achieve within the next 5 years?

In the welcome bag is a list of what groups there are and who is assigned to which group. Each board member is supposed to lead a different group. Those assigned to Julianne Steeger (Hanover)'s group are asked to join one of the other four groups.

The aim of working session 2 is to look at how to get people more involved. There seems to be a discrepancy between involvement of new and founding members. This is not necessarily a bad thing. A way needs to be found so everyone feels involved and heard.

Later in the day, the opening of the photo exhibition will take place. After that, the group goes to the town hall together as the mayor will officially welcome them all. The mayor has limited time in his busy schedule so it is really important to be there on time (18.00 hrs). After the mayor gives his speech, a group photo will be taken on the steps of the city hall along with the NGO's.

### *Feedback on the results of the discussion*

#### *Group 1*

There was a good, interesting discussion. Regarding expectations, the following were mentioned:

- Exchange of good and bad practices
- Good opportunity to learn from each other
- See what the various members are doing and do it even better
- Help other cities get involved locally
- Inspire / get new ideas
- Learn what works and what doesn't
- Some people think the Rainbow Cities Network should be more audible
- The extent to which a town can contribute depends on the size of the town and the resources available to members

- It is good to bring out differences
- Small towns must be helped
- Some key words further mentioned are: enthusiasm, energy, mutual understanding, visibility.

In the future, it would be good to:

- Do more advocacy work
- Maintain interconnectedness
- Faster and more diversity across countries
- The Rainbow Cities Network should operate at a local government level rather than a political level
- There should be communication on how the various cities position themselves in the network.
- There should be a safe space for open communication

### *Group 2*

The issues mentioned earlier are not repeated here.

- Most important is the recognition that cities have different realities and different levels of challenges and problems. That needs to be brought into the network.
- Cities experiencing fundamental problems should be helped.
- The network should be used to engage cities that do not yet meet the requirements for membership. Perhaps other cities can act as mentors.
- There was a lot of talking about how exchange of information can be achieved.
- It would be good to make it easy for cities to take responsibility and, for example, lead discussions or host online meetings.

### *Group 3*

On the question of what should be the main goals for the Rainbow Cities Network in the next five years, participants in this group indicate the following:

- Most people want more meetings per year, perhaps in the form of workshops. There were different ideas about that.
- On the topic of visibility, there were very strong opinions.
- Someone had the idea of developing a more visible campaign for more visibility that is easy to implement in cities.
- Inspire new cities and interest more cities to also participate in the Rainbow Cities Network. It would be good to set a target of growing to 100 members in the next five years.
- A prize could be established.
- People would like the annual meeting to last two full days.
- The Rainbow Cities Network should become stakeholders or more toward the European Union and the United Nations on an institutional level.
- If the Rainbow Cities Network actually wants to achieve this, one managing director is not enough. Then we need a team.

With regard to expectations, participants indicated:

- Empowerment
- Solidarity
- Energy
- Inspiration
- Being a member of a group where everyone has the same objectives

#### *Group 4*

##### Expectations:

- Sharing experiences (good and bad), not only at the annual meeting, but also in between. For that occasion smaller groups can be formed.
- It should be ensured that it is clear who is working on what topic.
- For many members, membership means an opportunity to legitimise towards their own politicians what is being done. That means a lot.
- There were discussions on how to influence local politicians. After each election, there may be different political parties and politicians with different views on things.

##### Future of the network:

- There were quite a few questions about what if the risk becomes too great to deal with.
- There needs to be a clear guideline.
- How to balance growing numbers and the need for recognition.
- One idea was to start working in chapters.
- Another idea was to develop a digital platform over the next five years. That comes with a lot of challenges.
- There has to be a balance between quality and quantity. Quantity is needed to make an impact. One idea for the growing network was to work in chapters / in different continents. There is a need to think about how to manage the huge diversity within the network properly. That is one of the beautiful challenges for the next board.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez tells that in future years, attendants will be asked to suggest topics or possibly host a workshop. It is not a question of if but when cities will host a workshop.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) explains the continuation of the programme. A speed dating event will take place with local LGBTI organisations. All attendants are assigned to a group. All groups have a number. This can be found in the welcome packet.

Everyone meets four organisations. All organisations will also be present at the reception at the town hall. If the attendants do not meet the organisation they would like to meet, there will be an opportunity to do so during the reception.



## Day 2 – Friday, November 4th

## Organization topics

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez reopens the meeting and welcomes all participants again. He asks the audience again to mention the name of the city in interventions for the purpose of the minutes.

## *By-laws*

The by-laws, particularly Article 10, are discussed. The welcome packet includes a printout of the by-laws. Susanne Bonnemann (Cologne) explains the changes.

She asked José Manuel Rosas Vázquez about the differences between the deed of incorporation and the by-laws. The by-laws is a set of documents where the organisation outlines how it should be run. The deed of incorporation is the official document recorded at the notary when an organisation is established.

There were differences between the deed and the by-laws. The proposed amendments align the two documents. Members sometimes looked in the by-laws and there was no information there about what the board does and what the board's responsibilities are. It is important to amend this.

The changes were not just copied and pasted into the by-laws. A number of minor changes have been made.

The proposed changes are:

### *Article 10*

- 10.1 The Board is appointed by the Annual Meeting: this provides their mandate to represent the network.
- 10.2 The Board is responsible for managing the Association. The board consists of a minimum of three (3) and maximum five (5) delegates from the member cities who are elected for 2 (two) years.
- 10.3 The Board is self-organized and acts jointly, it ought to consist of a Chair person, a Treasurer and a Secretary of the Board, all elected by the Board members themselves, the board is acting jointly.
- 10.4 The association is represented by the Board. The Board shapes the future of the association by representing the core values of the association to create a sustainable future in regard to LGBTI+ Inclusion, focusing strongly on the creation of LGBTI+ inclusive cities.
- 10.5 The Board is responsible for the proper course of business that guarantees the good functioning of the association.
- 10.6 The Board is responsible for managing, supporting and working collaboratively with the Coordinator/Director.
- 10.7 The Board is a support for the member cities; it is amenable interacting with and facilitating requests from member cities, as far as is possible.
- 10.8 The Board reports to the general assembly once a year at the annual meeting about its activities.
- 10.9 There is one annual Board meeting in person. The monthly meetings take place online.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) suggests that it would be good to think about not replacing the entire board every two years to ensure continuity on the board. A new chairman and a new board member could then be elected one year and a new treasurer, a new secretary and a new board member the next.

Susanne Bonnemann (Cologne) says this idea had already been discussed in 2017. It was said then that some board members would stay on longer so that the whole board would not be replaced at once. This was not included in the structure that way. However, the idea is to always have some experienced and some new board members. That now happens organically because some board members stay on longer than two years.

In Ljubljana, it was agreed that the board does not have to be elected every year. The deed already allows for an annual election and then only replacing half of the board. The question is whether this is necessary or whether it can be trusted to happen organically.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says this idea has been suggested before. However, there were technical difficulties in organising it properly. Perhaps this topic could be put on the agenda for one of the upcoming annual meetings. So far, there has always been a good mix. The board will discuss this idea. Sören Landmann (Mannheim) agrees.

#### Vote

There are three cities less present than on 3 November 2022. That means a total of 32 votes can be cast. The results of the vote are:

32 votes in favour of the proposal to adjust the by-laws as per proposal.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez will make the adjustments in the coming week. Members can find the new by-laws on the website from next week.

#### *Photo Exhibition*

Guillaume Mandicourt explains that the exhibition was opened yesterday. This year too, the quality is excellent. There are two important changes:

- 1) The board and the network wanted to give more support to the exhibition. Therefore, an introduction to the exhibition was requested from the board. It was also decided that the cost of framing and printing would be taken on by the network. He thanks the city of Vienna for taking this initiative.
- 2) The exhibition has been moved to November. There are several reasons for this. Initially, there was only this exhibition. Now there is also the Sharing the Rainbow project. Therefore, the idea was to give more space to the various projects. There are several events during the year in the various cities. By doing so, there is more opportunity to work on the exhibition. It also gives more cachet to the annual meeting. It is a nice event to add to the agenda. The local host can launch the exhibition this way. The exhibition can further be used by all members at any time during the year and it can also be used to create more visibility during IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT in the following year.

Susanne Bonnemmann (Cologne) says there has been no exhibition since 2020 because of covid. The intention was to highlight lesbian visibility in 2020. She plans to launch lesbian visibility day at the end of April 2023. The idea is to present past years' exhibitions (from 2020) as a series in 2023 if they have not been presented before.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) has heard from several cities that they do not find it so convenient to launch the exhibition in November. By then, everyone will be busy with the end of the year. There are not many opportunities to showcase the exhibition. He does understand the point when it comes to the content of the annual meeting. Would it be possible to launch the photo exhibition for the next year in November? After all, then there will be a current exhibition the following year. If an exhibition is launched in November, many people will see it in the next year as old.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) feels that this does skip a year. That could be seen as odd, but it might be possible though. Because of the covid period a restart seems possible. What the board had in mind regarding changing the date to November was that cities would have more flexibility. The cities could then decide how to handle the exhibition. She does not think it makes much difference whether that is a 2022 or 2023 exhibition. When there is more focus on the subject, the date probably does not matter much.

Guillaume Mandicourt says the title has been changed so that the exhibition can be used all year round and so that the exhibition can be separated from IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. The main information contained in the title is the topic. It may say what the year of launch is, but the exhibition is perfectly usable the year after as well.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) tells that many calendars are released one or two months before the new year. The same principle could be applied to the exhibition.

Florian Wibmer (Vienna) and the city of Vienna like the idea of the international photo exhibition being launched on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, which takes place annually on 17 May. That is a special day. The city can then do something with the subject of the exhibition. The launch of the exhibition in Vienna takes place annually on 17 May. Traditionally, the deputy mayor is present at this. The city of Vienna considers it important to maintain this day. This should not change. The exhibition launch is a great event leading up to many more events in June and July. He would not like to miss that.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) asked whether it would be possible to launch the current exhibition in May 2023 with the vice-mayor.

Florian Wibmer (Vienna) says this is an annual event, so of course it will be launched in May.

Siobhán O'Dowd, (Cork) took a quick look at the pictures of the exhibition. There are no dates on them, so the exhibition could be used on various dates, including IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. Cork took part for the first time in 2021. The theme in 2021 was intersexuality. That was very useful for Cork. They try to choose a theme every year in Cork to organise all kinds of events around it. For 2021 they picked intersexuality. She thinks it would be good to do the preparations in the autumn and then present the exhibition in November at the annual meeting. After that moment the photo exhibition is ready to go. Then the exhibition can be launched in the various cities in May the following year. This is maybe a voice in favour of the best of both worlds. The Rainbow Cities Network contributes to the photo exhibition and gets to see it at the annual meeting. After the annual meeting all cities can bring the photo exhibition back to the cities in May, either as an exhibition that stands on its own, or it could be like in Cork, where it is used to frame a theme. It is important that different themes are highlighted. The theme in 2020 was lesbian visibility. Even though Cork missed that theme Cork still uses that theme as an organizing principle. She sees no reason why it is not possible to have the best of both worlds.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) agrees with Cork. She thinks it would be best to have the best of both worlds and create some flexibility in the exhibition. There are quite a few activities in Rotterdam surrounding IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. For the rest of the year she sees that it slows down. Rotterdam likes to use the exhibition to generate extra attention for these topics throughout the rest of the year. This is easily solved by not having the year in it, but making it the eighth annual exhibition.

Tuija Mustajärvi (Helsinki) likes the idea that the preparations are done in November for the next year. She thought it was a great idea to launch next year's photo exhibition in November, because it is quite late in the year for that year's photo exhibition. In Helsinki the pride festival is in June and that is the time for Helsinki to present the exhibition. The exhibition feels outdated when the 2022 exhibition is used in 2023, even though the topics themselves are not. Of course they remain up-to-date for several years. She thinks it would solve the problem if there is no year named at all. If it is preferable to name the year, it is best to launch the exhibition for the following year in November.

Leslie Rialhe (Bordeaux) likes to have the choice between two topics. Unfortunately it was too late for Bordeaux to organize projects around the exhibition.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says this year was special, because it was late in the agenda. The topic for next year can be decided now. Then there is more time to organize things. The photo exhibition is an inspirational project for the network and the board really wants to have more members participating. The participation is a little less this year than previous years, so that needs to be improved for the following years. The board wants all member cities to be comfortable to jump into this project and share photos as well.

Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna) saw more changes this year than earlier mentioned. One was the way of uploading. He is interested to hear from the other cities how they found the new way of uploading. Is this more convenient than sending in material via e-mail? Some of the attendants wrote that they experienced major problems. Is the new way of uploading better or not? The other one is regarding the date, he calls for the exhibition to have it taken place at the same time in all cities. The main reason for that is that if the exhibition is opened earlier in another city, their vice mayor does not want to open the exhibition half a year later. When the exhibition opens at IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT, there is also a lot of publicity. The annual meeting can be used to discuss about the topic of the photo exhibition.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) thanks Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna) for mentioning the way of uploading. A cloudsystem has been established for the board. With this cloud is also worked for the exhibition to create a public form where the document and the pictures could be uploaded. Some people were having problems with uploading the files. She wonders if there is feedback on this topic.

Siobhán O'Dowd (Cork) was not able to upload.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) thought the uploading was very easy, as long it is okay for the board. It is important to name the files correctly.

Suzanne Bonnemann (Cologne) is thinking out loud. Is there a possibility for a compromise regarding the date? She understands the option for all cities launching on the same date, but she also sees that cities need more flexibility. It depends on the size of the city and the level of activity around IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. She sees that it is challenging. For the mayor of Cologne it does not matter that the exhibition has been opened elsewhere a few months earlier. If it is important for another mayor, then an option would be not to launch the photo exhibition at the annual meeting of the Rainbow Cities Network, but to launch the photo exhibition at IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT or afterwards. It would be a brand new exhibition. However, this option means that the process is pushed to the beginning of the year again. Unless it is said that the deadline is earlier, so that there is more time. In previous years there was a problem that the exhibition was planned to launch on IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT, but that people sent their information in late. So this meant that there was a limited time for printing. It was then uncertain whether the date would be met. If the photo exhibition is launched in May, this will mean that it is not launched at the Rainbow Cities Network meeting. A second option would be to launch it in November for the following year and then have any date in the following year for any city to launch it.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) does not see a difference with the past. The reason behind trying those changes was to create more flexibility and also to stay closer to the network, to make it available for more cities to be more flexible to use it throughout the whole year. It was also the intention to disconnect the exhibition from IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) thinks flexibility is the most important aspect. In that case it does not matter whether it is launched during IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT or later in the year. She understands the point about IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT, so if that is the compromise that can be reached, then she does not see why not.

Florian Wibmer (Vienna) wants to make clear that during the annual meeting, the subject will be determined. Photos can be submitted the following Monday. There is no need to wait. The experience every year is that a lot of people need last minute more time. With the collection of the necessary information can be started immediately after the annual meeting. The deadline is also really the deadline. It should not be missed.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) states that the message is not to wait.

Florian Wibmer (Vienna) continues that he thinks it is a nice subject for the annual meeting, where all participants will have the opportunity to see the exhibition at the mailinglist. It is not needed to already see the exhibition. It is more important to show the exhibition to a wider audience. He thinks IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT is still the best time for that. He does not like the idea of opening an exhibition that has already been opened. The general idea was always that the exhibition would be launched on a globally important date.

Florencio Chicote (Berlin) notes that the discussion focuses mainly on the date of the launch of the exhibition. The idea of having a network event around the network instead of around the cities is very charming. It does not have to be an official launch. The network should be given the opportunity to do something with the exhibition. The exhibition can probably just be shown instead of launched. He also finds the idea of not naming a year but, say, the tenth, eleventh or twelfth exhibition quite charming. There are two things, the network and the cities. The cities need, according to him, flexibility. The actions of a city are very much driven by the decision of the mayor. This also applies to the date of the exhibition. A special day like 17<sup>th</sup> May can be highly recommended but if this day is too late because there is a special occasion (for example an event in March) something needs to be done. It would be good if all cities framed the chosen topic in all events. What he would find acceptable for the cities and the network is if the exhibition were presented at the annual meeting and then launched by the cities on the days they need to launch it.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) agrees with Floriencio Chicote (Berlin). If the exhibition is going to be launched during IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT for the first time, then it is a good idea to have the deadline earlier. He thinks that for many cities it would be good to have the deadline in January, so that everything can be printed in February and be ready by May. He asks if it would be too complicated or rather helpful to decide the topic of the upcoming next two exhibitions, to be in advance.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) thinks that deciding two years in advance brings a risk of being out of date and not being able to address current topics.

Claire L'Hoste (Lille) participates for the first time. She addresses the problem that most of the French people do not speak English. She asks if it is allowed to translate the exhibition in French to share it in different places or even online.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says that everyone has the right to translate the exhibition in their own language. Perhaps the texts can be shared so that other French-speaking cities could also make use of them.

Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna) has done that before, the maximum then was six languages. The conclusion was that not everybody wanted translations. It was then decided that because the network is international the language could as well be English. He would like to respect the date of 17<sup>th</sup> of May. The exhibition is specifically for IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. He feels that if something is needed for the whole year, an additional project should be developed that meets this need. Everybody can come up with other, new ideas which fulfill the needs. He would really like to keep the photo exhibition for IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez suggests voting. There are two options:

- Launch the exhibition in May (as per current situation)
- Launch the exhibition in November, allowing a lot of flexibility for cities for the following year including IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT

One of the attendants asks if there is an option 'I do not care'.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez Manuel continues that if a city does not vote, that is the I do not care option. Voting will be done by raising hands. Again one vote per city applies.

Susanne Bonnemann (Cologne) wants to know, to avoid misunderstandings, if launching the exhibition in May means that the exhibition is an IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT exhibition, which should be launched then and even if the exhibition is launched later in a year it will still say that it is an IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT exhibition. For anyone launching later in a year it is then obvious that the exhibition is not totally up to date. Or is it, because this was discussed this earlier as well, a year round exhibition, with a first launch on IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. How it is framed makes a large difference.

According to Susanne Bonnemann (Cologne) this does not make it any clearer.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) explains that the procedure is different. That makes the biggest difference. What the board wanted to do this year was to present the exhibition at the annual meeting. After that, everyone would have seen the exhibition. The board is open to not mentioning the year. In fact, everyone has the exhibition at an earlier time. All pieces have to be handed in in time. The difference from before is not that big. There are just a different procedure and different dates. The board wanted to make it easier for the cities. Now it is up to the cities to decide whether to continue with the new procedure and dates or to revert to the old situation.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says in both cases it will be a Rainbow Cities Network annual exhibition. Even though the date will not be prominently displayed, of course the date is visible somewhere. The main information will be the subject of the exhibition and information that it is a Rainbow Cities Network annual exhibition.

Tuija Mustajärvi (Helsinki) says she needs clear options, because during the discussion several suggestions were made. For her it is a different thing to launch the exhibition in November with the year on it or with only 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> on it. There is a difference if the exhibition is launched in May and it is only connected to IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT or if it is a broader exhibition. She would really like to hear what the cities are voting for.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) explains that on the exhibition now, no year is mentioned. But somewhere in the comments it might be visible that the exhibition was launched this year. There must be a date mentioned somewhere, but it is not the main information.

Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region) notes that the exhibition can either be launched in November or in May. When it is launched in May that is a rather clear date. If November is chosen, the date is not very strict.



Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says that when the exhibition is launched in May, it will be strongly linked to IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. If the exhibition is launched in November the exhibition is more connected to the Rainbow Cities Network. That is a different way of communication.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) thinks there are at least three options:

- Present and launch the exhibition in November
- Launch the exhibition in May
- Present the exhibition in November (sneak peek) and then launch it officially in May, not only linked to IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT and from that moment on the exhibition can be used the whole year. That gives the flexibility that a lot of cities are looking for. It can be used in the pride month or the pride season.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) concludes there is a third option, which means that the exhibition will be launched in November but from that moment on until May there will be no communication about it.

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) contradicts that. The exhibition is presented internally at the annual meeting.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) asks what the difference is if it is launched internally in November and officially in May. When do the cities want to launch?

Sören Landmann (Mannheim) wonders if the exhibition was launched officially yesterday.

Florian Wibner (Vienna) thinks it is funny that the curator of the exhibition is not involved in the decision-making. He is after all the inventor. When the exhibition is launched at the annual meeting he will not be able to have the (vice) mayor opening the exhibition. The exhibition has always been linked to IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT and it could be so in the future.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) mentions that this was the original idea. Attempts have just been made to change this. This is not an exhibition of Vienna, but it is an exhibition of the Rainbow Cities Network. If the cities want to go back to the old situation, that is also okay. The main arguments have been exchanged. There should be a vote. She suggests sticking with the original two options.

Susanne Bonnemann (Cologne) retracts her comment that the exhibition could be presented in November and then the exhibition could only be launched in May. That would leave the exhibition on the shelf for five or six months. That does not give cities flexibility and that shrinks the chances to reach many people. She asks whether the board would be willing to compromise so the exhibition is launched in May. On the introduction poster should not be mentioned that it is an IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT exhibition. Then cities who want to display the exhibition in June or perhaps in October do not feel like they are showing an old exhibition.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) concludes that the desire is not to use the year or the terms IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT so that the exhibition can be used throughout the year. That is possible, but it is hard.

Susanne Bonnemann (Cologne) states that every city can have their own way of using the exhibition. Each city can use it at a date of their choice. If there are cities who want to present it at IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT they can be given the international collection. If a city wants to present the exhibition at pride they can use a different framing or introduction. If the name of the exhibition has not IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT in it, the cities can have the best of both worlds. In that case there is flexibility for each city and nobody has a feeling that the exhibition is old / outdated. Vienna can still launch it as the first city on IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT.



Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says it is possible to not mention IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT in the introduction, like it was done this year. For the Rainbow Cities Network the exhibition is not related to IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. Again, the main information is the topic of the exhibition.

Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region) mentions that it is clear that some people really want to have the exhibition on IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. He suggests to start voting. According to him there is a choice between launching the exhibition in November or launching it during IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) thinks in all cases the exhibition can not be used before the official launch. There is enough flexibility in both cases.

Marije Pluijm thinks that is not true if IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT is mentioned on the introduction.

Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region) reports that cities who want to launch the exhibition in May (first option) want to introduce the exhibition on IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT and they will also like the name IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT in the topic. The other option is not to introduce the exhibition on a specific date, but linked to the annual meeting.

Therefore Susanne Bonnemmann (Cologne) prefers to compromise. She suggests to have three options. If a choice is made, the curator should indicate whether he can live with the choice in question.

Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna) prefers opening the exhibition on IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT. Vienna has never published an exhibition in other cities. For Vienna it is important that every city gets the exhibition beginning 17<sup>th</sup> May and from that moment every city can use it as they please. Vienna would like to maintain the date of 17<sup>th</sup> May. If any city wants to launch on a later date that is fine.

Someone emphasizes that the name of the exhibition is Rainbow Cities Network exhibition instead of IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT exhibition.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) starts the vote.

Vote:

- Launch the exhibition in May for IDAHOT/IDAHOBIT
- Launch the exhibition in November for the annual meeting
- Abstain from voting.

Again, one vote per city applies.

Vote

In total 31 cities have voted. The results of the vote are:

9 people are in favour of launching the exhibition in May. 8 persons are in favour of launching the exhibition in November. 14 people abstain from voting.

Fe Maidel (Sao Paulo) says there is no real agreement, because there is no majority.

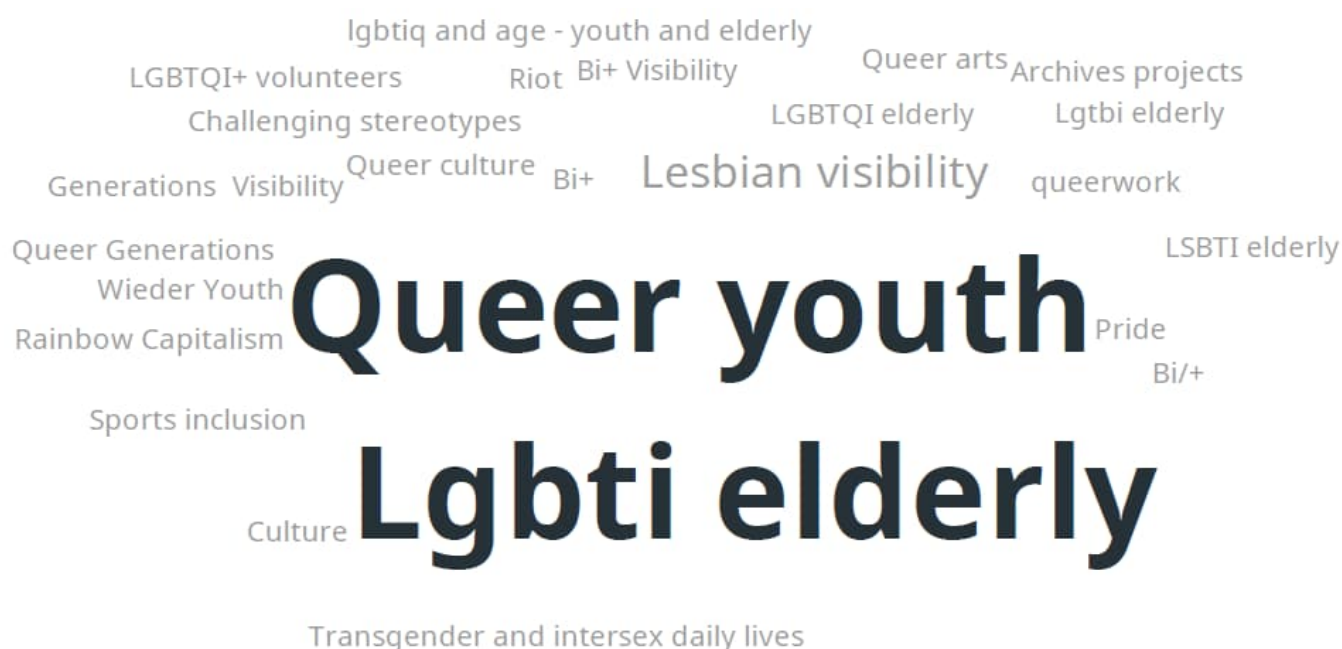
One person thinks the discussion should focus on how the exhibition is framed rather than the date. He says that it is most important that the introductory poster and text frame the exhibition in a right way. It is suggested that perhaps the first poster can be changed.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says that is not allowed.

The curator said a vote had just been taken. He proposes to keep it the way it was. In five years time this topic can be re-evaluated. In the meantime the board can figure out how the evaluation can be done (in a small group). The evaluation should be done by several users including the creator. This group should come up with amendment proposals.

### *Topic 2023*

Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna) asks attendees to send the photo, text and title of the photo. The photo should be as artistic as possible. It should really be a piece of art. It could be a documentary, the attendants could run a competition, or it could be that a certain organisation provides a photo or the attendants take a photo themselves. It doesn't matter. He asks attendants to be as creative as possible. Topics are needed for next year. He suggests the topic of queer youth. It was analysed which themes were most popular in previous years. The ones that were the biggest success when it comes to the number of cities participating are inter-sexuality followed by families and 50 years of pride. These topics are very broad, making it easy for people to find a picture or an idea.



Sören Landmann (Mannheim) has a suggestion as well: Bi+ visibility.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez informs the audience that through the poll, the topics can be filled out.

### **Vote**

In total 33 votes were cast. The results of the vote are:

Queer youth 39%

LGBTI elderly 30%

Queer generations 24%

Bi+ visibility 6%

The topic for the exhibition 2023 will be Queer Youth.

It was asked if the topic LGBTI elderly could be used for 2024. The 2024 topic will be decided next year.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Session

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez apologises for the fact that the introduction written by Vienna had not been posted at the photo exhibition. This has since been rectified.

He asks the audience to post something on social media with #RainbowCitiesNetwork. He posted a message on Twitter yesterday. Marije Pluijm shared photos via Whatsapp.

There are four workshops:

Experience with TERF movements and approaches of the cities - Florencio Chicote (Berlin)  
Queer Youth: Experience with queer youth centers, queer youth groups - Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna)  
Safety in Public Spaces - Marius Emmerich (Heidelberg)  
Lesbian Visibility - Johanna Illgner (Mannheim)

### Conclusions

*Experience with TERF movements and approaches of the cities - Florencio Chicote (Berlin)*

The examples given are based on experience. They mostly deal with issues such as safety, transphobia, gender diversity, using inclusive language, strong anti-queer rhetoric or misinformation.

These topics are very interesting maybe to include at some point when thinking about strategies. It was really interesting to see how active cities are already. Photos were taken of the flipcharts. On these, the cities' names have also been mentioned with the various approaches. **These will be shared so that if anyone wants more information, the respective city can be contacted.**

Examples are:

- Respond to misinformation with official statements
- Programm official actions that are developed by cities
- Reaffirm the support of third persons or groups, for example professionals if they become victims of the TERF-movement
- Joint solidarity towards threats
- Highlight trans inclusion in speeches
- Educate and inform the LGBTIQ community
- Creating materials/information on different topics regarding trends. There is a beautiful example in Reykjavik, called the trans inclusive checklist
- Create funding guidelines that are based on human rights
- Try to create a broad support

*Queer Youth: Experience with queer youth centers, queer youth groups - Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna)*

#### Topic 1: Visibility and empowerment of youth

- More training that does not focus on the topic but mainly on self-reflection
- Queer role models (famous people) / queer teachers
- Learn to have dialogues together / learning to listen
- Categories vs. individuals, seeing individuals instead of categorizing
- Education in schools
- Work with all youth whether they are LGBTI or not to promote gender and sexual diversity
- Parent role in supporting the young people
- Attractive programme

- Learn and promote non-binary vision of persons
- Fight against harassment in public spaces (thanks to 'Angela'), create inclusive public spaces
- Make adults want the change
- Funding
- To grant youth-queer rights and recognition
- Promote inclusive public services (in schools, sports and administration)
- To avoid and prevent prejudices about queer youth and different origins, education (intersectionality) perspective
- How do cities organize the flow
- Detect demands
- More queer youth friendly teachers
- Special institutions, trainings for all
- Empowering young people to be who they are
- Reducing hate crimes and increasing public acceptance.

#### Topic 2: Safe space

- Balance between visibility and safe space (secret place?)
- How to be (e.g. trans youth, refugee)
- More inclusive places (not only youth centers, but also other services)
- Education trainings (inside youth centers, public, other services)
  - Raising awareness, information, communication
- Logo LGBT+ friendly
- Problem: safe accommodation (young people under 18)

#### Topic 3: Role of the city

- Empowerment of the queer youth
- Supply framework for support
- Education
- Organic growth
- Building bridges/connect organisations even outside the city
- Detecting needs
- Gender inclusive communication
- Promote grants for organisations working with queer youth / support funding
- Protocol with different municipal agents and NGOs against LGBTI phobia (coordination)
- Peer groups
- Establishing safe spaces for the youth (physical / mental)
- Network of schools and institutions against LGBT phobia
- Involve citizens in gender and sexual diversity
- Promote gender and sexual diversity in non-formal educative and leisure spaces
- Promote communication (internal and external) about gender and sexual diversity
- Create public policies about prejudices

#### *Safety in Public Spaces - Marius Emmerich (Heidelberg)*

Public spaces are defined by this group as any places that are not domestic. A lot of issues were raised and a lot of work is still to be done.

### Preventing hate crime

- Underreporting is a big issue, as well as data collection
- Raise awareness and strength within the community
- A lot of different communities are afraid to report incidents. Solutions on different levels are needed. For example, how does the police react to a member of the LGBTI community
- Is there a possibility of bridging reportings, like monitoring by NGOs?
- Create different opportunities for people to go somewhere and find help
- Data collection to go further with administrative and political work to change and update existing institutional structures so that people become less afraid to report incidents.

### Follow up if something happens

The question was: if something happens to you and you report this, then what is the follow-up? What really happens in individual cases? How are people helped or is it just for monitoring? There has to come another working group on this issue.

### *Lesbian Visibility - Johanna Illgner (Mannheim)*

The working group started with determining what the definition of lesbian is. That is not so easy. There were not many people in the group working on lesbian topics. Therefore, the group has talked mostly about how someone could start. Are there strong lesbian NGOs or not? This was quite interesting and of course tied to the question 'What is a lesbian?' For the group it was very clear that an intersexual approach is needed. Basically beside that question two other fields were defined about which the group talked mostly:

- What to do if lesbians do not want to take the spotlight? How is visibility created if lesbians themselves are not keen to step into the spotlight. A few ideas and good practices were shared.
- The second big topic the group talked about is that in most of the cities the LGBT department is not really working together on lesbian topics (equal opportunity offers). This is a big field to be targeted.

One more question was: What is the goal of lesbian visibility? When talking about visibility of and working together with the lesbian community or queer women community, two things are important:

- Empowerment for the lesbians or lesbian groups
- Power (to go out, take the spotlight)

Within the EU project there has been a workshop on lesbian visibility. She promised to forward the results of that workshop. There were a lot of interesting good practices and solutions. Probably it is a good idea to have a list of best practices regarding lesbian visibility.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Working Session

At the end of 2020, the European Commission provided a grant to draft the very first LGBTI guidelines for local governments. Officially (that means according to contract) nineteen cities are involved in this project. However, from the start of the project, the project is open to all member cities. The cities involved receive a contribution if it is necessary to travel for the project. Heidelberg and Bergen are actively involved in the project but do not receive this contribution. By March 2023, the project will be completed. By then, the aim is to have a set of recommendations for cities that do not have an LGBTI policy. They can then learn from all the experiences included in the guidelines for local governments. In 2021, the first meeting on this topic took place in Brussels Capital Region. At that time, it was only possible to meet online, but it was nevertheless a fruitful meeting. This year, there have been two events.

One was held in Berlin. 70 people were attending this meeting, including NGOs. Other cities were also given the opportunity to link their NGOs to the project. In September 2022, there was a meeting in Aarhus. Here only cities and not NGOs attended.

Next year, Cork will host a meeting in January 2023 and Kotor will also contribute next year. From the grant, three overnight stays will be reimbursed per participant. Next year, the project will be completed. After that, the idea is to start new projects and apply for grants for them. Then more cities can be involved. The member cities will receive an e-mail inviting them to participate in a new project if there is one.

Sometimes cities drop out. If a city says it wants to participate, it is important that the city in question does not drop out later. Commitment is very important. Contracts are concluded with subsidy providers. Of course, anything can happen that forces a city to abandon a project, but efforts should still be made to honour commitments. The experience at the moment is though sometimes cities decide not to come to the meetings without any important reason. When it comes to hosting events, adjustments sometimes have to be made as a result. Sometimes small changes like these take more time than the content itself.

Best practices/recommendations were collected in Aarhus and Berlin. These have been categorized by topic so that the other cities are able to understand them.

In Cork, an attempt will be made to create a structured draft document from the collected content with as annexes the best practices shared by the member cities. In Kotor, the project will be officially launched. This might prompt cities not to attend because of the difficult accessibility.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says that in the future, many less easily accessible places may need to be visited. It is understandable that cities find this difficult, but it should be kept in mind that these 'not usual suspects' should also be given a chance. Besides the launch in Kotor, the aim of this document is to bring it to people's attention at international events and strengthen the network's image. If member cities think they can present it somewhere and benefit from this, then by all means do so. Many of the attendants are hearing about this project for the first time today. The board felt it was important to inform the audience.

One of the attendants asks if more cities would be welcome at the launch in Kotor. What is the character of the launch?

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez explains that all cities involved in the project are automatically invited to attend the launch. For one person per city involved, travel and hotel accommodation will be paid for. This is also due to the desire to eventually generate a balanced opinion. If there are many persons representing a city, there is a possibility that cities that delegate only one person may not be able to put forward their opinion properly. They may then be overruled by the other cities with more people. Of course, the other member cities are also invited. They, however, have to pay for the travel and hotel accommodation themselves.

A member of the European Commission attended the opening of the project. That is important. The fact that the quality commissioner of the EU bothered to attend is important for the network. It is requested that if the mayors of the cities hosting an event cannot attend then at least a video message can be recorded. A big launch is being prepared for the project.

Vienna wants to know if there is a role for member cities.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez replies that the intention is to provide the cities with the document and have a pleasant discussion about it.



Florencio Chicote (Berlin) wants to know if the media will be approached.

According to José Manuel Rosas Vázquez, that will certainly be the case. Local media will certainly be used, but also the European Commission will be used. The European Commission expects a publication from the Rainbow Cities Network and will use it.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) asks whether at the launch of the project also thank the member cities, which are not formally involved in the project, can be thanked because they did contribute to the project even though indirectly, by providing good examples. It would be good to maintain solidarity in the network. The project is great, but it is unfortunate that it does create a division between European and non-European cities. He advocates ensuring that cities remain cohesive. Although the European Commission supports the network with a lot of money, it is important not to forget the other member cities.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says there is no intention at all to exclude non-European cities. Since the beginning, efforts have been made to open up the project to everyone. Everyone who has contributed to the project will be included at the end of the project, unless it is said that there is no need. Everyone who has contributed will be mentioned by name including the name of the organization. Berlin and Heidelberg will also be named, of course.

#### *The strategy of RCN, the future ahead*

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez makes a mysterious statement: Rainbow Cities is going to the north. He leaves it at that for a moment. However, this has got nothing to do with this subject.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) mentioned that the board had recently been discussing the strategy to be followed. This has raised a number of questions, which the board is happy to discuss with those present. The input given yesterday in response to the question of what the role of an Rainbow Cities Network member is, will be used.

When working on the strategy, the board realised very well that the input from member cities was needed. Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) thanks the audience for their contributions. The board will continue with this in the coming period and as soon as there is something to report, the board will come back to the network with it.

The questions at the moment:

- What are the RCN's core values?
- What are the RCN's topics?
- Who are the RCN's target groups?
- What are the goals for the RCN? What does the RCN want to achieve in the next 5/3/1 years?

Over time, the answers to the above questions may vary. What was very clear at the beginning may be very different now. There is reflection on what the most important issues are. Yesterday at working session 2, there was a clear desire that the Rainbow Cities Network should have a greater presence within the European Commission and the United Nations. If these are new target groups, there is a lot of work involved.

Most of the questions are basic ones when it comes to setting a strategy. That is why it is important for the board to address these issues periodically. Yesterday's feedback is taken into account when setting strategy. The board would like to motivate members to participate more intrusively in the strategy process.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) explains that 10 years ago, it started with an informal network. Now it has to become more professional. This is an ongoing process.

### *Board elections*

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez states that the board has to change every two years based on the by-laws. According to the deed and by-laws, the board has to be re-elected every two years. Three board members are going to leave this year. He explained that the vote is for cities, not people. José Manuel Rosas Vázquez asks the candidates and the board members up for re-election to come to the stage. This concerns the cities: Bergen, Cork, Hanover, Mannheim, Reykjavik.

The candidates introduce themselves.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez thanks the attendants for their willingness to participate in the board. He asks if any other cities would like to apply. This is not the case.

Wolfgang Wilhelm (Vienna) mentions the e-mail received from Juliane Steeger. Apparently, she has spoken to several cities. He was not aware of that. For him, it is not acceptable to have five women on the board. He feels that this meant the board composition is not representative enough.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) says the vote was not for individuals but for cities. It is not up to anyone to decide who participates in the board on behalf of a city. The city can decide to replace the representative at any time. He does agree that it is remarkable that the board is now made up exclusively of women.

One of the participants says that in this context there is a good example. The city of Mannheim had been elected and during the term, the gender identity of the representative changed. He is confident that the board will ensure that different perspectives are included in decision-making despite only one gender being represented on the board.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says that the current chairperson sent an email indicating that there would be elections. She called on members to apply by e-mail if they were interested in a board position. This was done by Cork, for example. As the board saw that three board members would resign, there was no response to the request for cities to sign up as board members and it is important to keep the board up to par in terms of numbers, Juliane Steeger approached cities/representatives on behalf of the full board.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) explains that the deed and by-laws state that there are elections every two years. This is not new.

One attendant asks if only the three candidates are voted on or if board members who are up for re-election are also voted on.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says the latter is the case. A choice can be made between, yes and no, but someone can also abstain from voting.

One attendant agrees with the current proposal. In the future, she would like to see a good balance between north and south, big and small. This will certainly not be easy. It might be good to motivate people during meetings. People often do not know how much work board membership entails, so people may be hesitant to sign up.

Grace Proch (Hanover) says that more people of different gender identities have been approached, but they were either unwilling or unable.



Tuija Mustajärvi (Helsinki) suggests that in the future, as more and more cities from outside Europe join the network, this should also be taken into account in the composition of the board, so that the focus is not only on Europe.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says the network continues to develop. He is already thinking about what to do when 100 or more cities join the network. Then a five-member board will no longer be sufficient.

The attendants have voted:

Cork 33 positive votes (100%)

Hanover 34 votes, 97% were positive.

Mannheim 34 positive votes (100%).

Bergen 33 votes, 94% were positive.

Reykjavik 33 votes, 97% were positive.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez thanks those present.

*Farewell old board, welcome new board*

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says now is the time to say goodbye to the outgoing board members. He has worked intensively with them for the past three years. He asks the three outgoing board members to come to the stage.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) replaces Juliane Steeger today. It would have been logical for her to address the outgoing board members as she worked with them for much longer and knew them better than Johanna Illgner, who only worked with them since last year. She thanks them for their work for the Rainbow Cities Network and can highly recommend working with them. Fortunately, they all remain active. In particular, she thanks Marije Pluijm for her last action as host of this annual meeting. It is clearly visible how much work that was and is. The outgoing board members receive a bunch of flowers as a token of appreciation.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) thanks her fellow board members for their cooperation in recent years. She gives them a small gift to remember Rotterdam by. Grace Proch (Hanover) passes the gift to Juliane Steeger.

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) thanks the attendants for the trust placed in him over the past years. It is a demanding job, but also a very satisfying one. He thanks for the good times he has been privileged to experience.

Danny Jacqmot (Brussels Capital Region) thinks it has been very interesting years for him since Barcelona. It is nice to have a new board now.

Marije Pluijm (Rotterdam) also has a small present for the three new board members. She wishes them lots of fun.

### *Hosting general assembly requirements*

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) explains what requirements apply to hosting an annual assembly:

- The host city of the annual meeting:
- Takes part in the preparatory meeting (2 months prior to the annual meeting)
- Organizes the annual meeting in advance (providing a meeting room and coffee, tea, and water for all participants for 1,5 days. No obligation to provide hotel, lunch, or dinner)
- Sends out the official invitation to the annual meeting
- Decides on one topic of the annual meeting and prepares an exchange with the local LGBTQI+ community
- Summarizes – with the help of the coordinator- the annual meeting in a general report which can be published publicly (e.g. on the website and social networks)

The requirements for the preparatory meeting are written down in detail. Johanna Illgner can send the document if needed.

### *Vote new host city for 2023*

Reykjavik has proposed to host the annual meeting in 2023. Cities are asked to vote on this.

33 cities voted, 97% are in favour of Reykjavik as the new host city for 2023.

Next year Reykjavik will be the host city.

### *Vote new host city for 2024 and 2025*

The city of Helsinki last week indicated its intention to host the annual meeting in 2024. Attendants are asked to vote on this.

34 cities voted, 100% are in favour of Helsinki as the new host city for 2024.

In 2024 Helsinki will be the host city for the annual meeting.

The city of Copenhagen would like to host the annual meeting in 2025.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) reports that normally a choice is made for two years. More and more cities are joining and then those cities would only get a chance after years. Why should a choice be made now for 2025? That does not make sense. The by-laws also state that a choice is always made for up to two years ahead.

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says this can easily be corrected. The 2023 annual meeting will choose which city will host the 2025 annual meeting.

Grace Proch (Hanover) says this issue has already been widely discussed. In Bergen it was agreed to hold an annual meeting outside Europe every few years (as a try-out).

Guillaume Mandicourt (Geneva) mentions that if there are no candidates from outside Europe, a candidate within Europe can always be chosen. Cities out of Europe are welcome to apply.

### *Hosting preparatory meeting 2023 and 2024*

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez reports that no candidate has yet applied to host the 2023 preparatory meeting. During the meeting, the city of Heidelberg offered to host this meeting.

It is explained that this meeting serves to prepare the agenda for the annual meeting. The host should provide a meeting room and catering. Cities participating in the preparatory meeting will bear the costs. This way, smaller towns with limited budgets can also contribute. The town that organised the previous annual meeting, the town that will organise the next annual meeting and the town hosting the preparatory meeting are present at this preparatory meeting. In the past, a board member always attended as well. This is also described in the by-laws.

The attendants have voted:

32 cities voted, 100% are in favour of Heidelberg as the new host city for the preparatory meeting in 2023. In 2023 Heidelberg will be the host city for the preparatory meeting.

For 2024, the city of Nurnberg has applied to host the preparatory meeting.

The attendants have voted:

32 cities voted, 100% are in favour of Nurnberg as the new host city for the preparatory meeting in 2024. In 2024 Nurnberg will be the host city for the preparatory meeting.

Keynote speech bij Anja Limon (Senior Programme Manager at the Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration) on LGTBI Refugees and forced migrants.

No minutes have been taken of this speech.

Presentation best practices by the cities

José Manuel Rosas Vázquez says that three cities were supposed to present their best practices but Berlin will not present theirs today.

### *Best practices from Paris*

#### 1. Paris and LGBTIQ+ migrants

In 2016 445.546 people (20% of the 2,19 million population of the city) were foreign-born. 316.120 (14.4%) of them were non-nationals from over 150 nationalities, mainly from the EU (4,4 %), Maghreb (2,8 %), other African countries (2,4%). There are 23.972 beneficiaries of international protection living in Paris (estimated figure 2019).

Nationalities most represented in France among beneficiaries of either a refugee status either subsidiary protection, are Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Sudan, Albania, Russia, Somalia and Turkey. There is some uncertainty about the number of social services beneficiaries.

### *Paris' mobilization for refugees' reception and integration since 2015*

Strong political commitment of the Mayor, involving thirteen of their deputy mayors, covering a wide scope of topics : child welfare, solidarity, human rights, integration, education, higher education, health, culture, international relations, sport, employment and citizenship.

*Mobilization Plan of the Community of Paris for Refugee Reception adopted by the City Council in October 2015*; 100 members and contributors involved (government agencies, NGOS, foundations, universities, research centres, health services, media, religious organizations, etcetera).

In 2019 a house of refugees was established. This is a place for all migrants, refugees, NGOS, students, inhabitants of the neighbourhood and all Parisians interested in improving refugee integration and working together to make newcomers feel at home in Paris.

Since april 2022 the House of Refugees is open every Saturday. The House of Refugees offers social support service for LGBTQI+ refugees. Some more initiatives are shown. They also created a space for LGBTQI+ people from the Maghreb and the middle east while living in France.

## 2. French legislation regarding LGBTQI+

### *Birth of French current legal setting regarding LGBTQI+ refugees*

On 28 July 1951 the Ratification of the Geneva Convention took place (relating to the status of refugees. On 25 July 1952, the Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) and the Refugees Appeal Board were installed.

Geneva convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the status of refugees, art. 1 – A : Decisions of non-eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of (...) being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (...)

In order to define and identify these particular social groups, the Nation Court for the Right of Asylum decisions are based on two distincts grounds of discrimination recognized by french law :

- Sexual orientation (since 1985)
- Sex identity (since 2010) → Gender identity (since 2016)

To be protected, LGBTQI+ people have to be recognized as persecuted by the National Court for Right of Asylum.

### *French law concerning sexual orientation criteria*

A lot of progress in French law concerning sexual orientation during the first half of the 1980's

- 12 June 1981: French health Minister Edmond Hervé announces that homosexuality is no longer considered as a disease.
- 22 June 1982: the 'Quilliot law' ends legal-based discriminations against sexual orientation.
- 13 July 1983: the 'Le Pors law' gives a legal frame to fight against discriminations based on sexual orientation in the public service.
- 25 July 1985: French law recognizes sexual orientation as a point of discrimination in general.

However, the Refugees Appeal Board (now National Court for the Right of Asylum – CNDA) does not come down against discriminations based on sexual orientation until 1998, judging they do not know enough about these discriminations in foreign countries. From 1998 to 2004, the Refugees Appeal Board established case-laws, country by country, in order to determine if sexual orientation really is a point of persecution. On 29 april 2004 the French Council of State acts that discriminations based on sexual orientation are enough to determine that migrants are recognized as refugees. Later that year, homophobic acts are officially recognised as crimes.

### *French law concerning gender identity criteria*

French legislation took a lot of time to discuss and act gender identity as a legal concept which can be a point of discrimination and persecution:

- In 1981 and 1982: two different bills proposed by the French senator Henri Caillavet in order to legally recognize transgender people are both rejected.
- 08 February 2010: French health Minister Roselyne Bachelot announces by decree that transsexuality is no longer considered as a disease.

- 06 August 2012: transphobic acts are officially recognized as crimes.
- From 2012 to 2016: there is still no legal recognition of gender identity. By using the legal concept of sex identity, French legislation forces transgender people to sterilize themselves and/or have a sex reassignment surgery in order to have their identity confirmed by law.
- 18 November 2016: French legislation officially recognizes gender identity.

Concerning transgender rights and gender identity recognition, France is often driven by international and European authorities :

- 25 March 1992: France is sentenced by the European Court of Human Rights because of its unrecognition of transgender persons' identity.
- 21 November 2008: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recommends to recognize gender identity as a point of persecution which can justify the right of asylum.
- 13 December 2011: the European Court for Human Rights follows the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
- 07 November 2013: a European Court of Justice case-law recognizes gender identity as a criteria which can motivate the right of asylum.

However, gender identity is not recognized by French law until November 2016.

#### *Prospects*

- Expansion of which is considered by French law as a persecution for LGBTQI+ people (for instance, conversion therapies are seen as torture since 25 January 2022, which can open a right for asylum to whom it may be concerned.
- Overload of the National Court for the Right of Asylum services, which reduces the possibilities for LGBTQI+ migrants to be received by a judge before he gives his verdict.

### 3. Good practices

Since August 2020, three LGBTQI+ refugees have been sharing an apartment made available by the City of Paris. In this four-room apartment, the tenants can breathe, sheltered from the violence due to their sexual orientation which made them flee their country.

Since October 2021, the 'A Room of Your Own' project has housed three exiled lesbians in an apartment located in a building governed by the mayor of Paris.

Soon a welcoming place for the most vulnerable LGBTQI+ people will be realized. A place of 520 square meters. This inter-associative space in the Marais will be dedicated to helping and supporting the most stigmatized LGBTQI+ people, in particular migrants and victims of violence.

#### *Best practices from Sao Paulo*

Sao Paulo is the biggest city in South America. The city is close to Mexico City. At the annual meeting Fe Maidel heard about the same problems and government issues she experiences in Sao Paulo.

Brazil is home to 210 million people. Of these, 10% belong to the LGBTI+ population. That amounts to 20 million people. These people are untraceable. That is a problem. If they do not come out for their orientation, they remain untraceable. 1% of the LGBTI+ population is transgender.

They often do not speak English and they cannot travel. If they were to come out that they are transgender, they would be excluded from society. When it comes to youth, it is often difficult to convince families and schools to embrace them and protect them before something serious happens to them.

A map of the city is displayed. In Sao Paulo, there are five centres across the city for LGBT people that are visited by 1000-2000 people a month. There are also five vans. These can be found wherever needed. In the centers they discuss about prevention, but they also advise on subjects as the possibilities of a name change or financial help.

In the centres, LGBTI people find a safe place, they can talk to psychologists, there are social workers and a lawyer. There is also an educator. All these people listen to what the wishes are. They also make an effort to get young people into school. The problem is big with this vulnerable group. A survey was done and it showed that only 32% of LGBTI workers feel comfortable and welcome at work to show that they belong to the LGBTI community. Among managers, only 21% disclosed that they belong to the LGBTI community. That is bad for the LGBTI community, because without leaders encouraging people to come out they will not be able to live a good life.

In the past four years the following difficulties were experienced:

- during the training
- in high school, undergraduate and graduate  
(There is no placement for LGBTI people according to the training they received before. They are always underpaid.)
- professional qualification
- job types

#### Refugees

Regarding the LGBTI refugee issue, a survey was conducted when Sao Paulo was asked to comment on this. No refugee was found who wanted to come out in favour of being an LGBTI person. This is simply because of the fact that by doing so, they cut ties with their community.

The only ones who do come forward are trans people who have already undergone transition. They come to Sao Paulo to get a better life. In general, they do not have a good life. They have to deal with drug dealers, prostitution and so on.

A van is used to search for migrants. During the pandemic, families of 30 to 40 people were housed in a room, where they had to work day and night. Only one person was allowed to leave to do shopping (food and other goods). They did not want to talk to the social workers.

An attempt was made in the mayor's office to find out how these people could be reached.

In the framework of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, celebrated globally on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the City of São Paulo virtually launched, on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, an Operational Protocol Standard (POP) that guides humanized care for the refugee population and trans and transvestite migrants living in the City of São Paulo.

The population tries to run away as they expect to be picked up by the police.

In Sao Paulo, there is a health system where you don't have to prove who you are. You are helped no matter where you come from. If you have a job, you automatically have a social security number, but people often don't know that. Migrants are often scared and hide. Fe Maidel and her colleagues are going to explain to these people how the system in Sao Paulo works for LGBTI people. The letters will also be explained. The Q is not used. After all, in Sao Paulo queer means strange.

The name LGBT is the official name used in Sao Paulo since 2008 by the social movement and the federal government. Added to this are the letters I (Intersexual) and A (Agenders) and the plus. More than 1,200 civil servants have been trained online in how to deal with LGBTIA persons.

Training of the various teams in the city is needed. Civil servants ask what someone's sex is, for example. That is not correct. Asked should be about gender. This way of thinking needs to be changed. People need to learn to deal with this.

The centres for LGBT people welcomed people from Venezuela, Argentina, Outros, Ecuador, Haiti, Siria, Armenia, Bolivia, Cuba, Mozambique, Colombia, China and Angola. They all indicated they needed help after coming out. There have been many but Fe Maidel is not allowed to share the exact numbers.

It is an honour to present this to the audience. Together, a path must be found to embrace the LGBT community around the world and create for LGBT people a better life and a better world for all of us.

Johanna Illgner (Mannheim) handles the closing remarks. Before going to the closing remarks she says the city of Vienna sent an e-mail. It arrived after the deadline, but she would still like to address this e-mail here. The email concerned the remark that the annual meeting should always be held in Europe. This was discussed a long time ago. The deed and by-laws were drafted afterwards. The deed and by-laws state that any city can apply. Hopefully this will give more clarity.

Suggestions have been made to the new board in recent days. In particular two interesting suggestions are mentioned:

- Deal better with the own data by developing a database for best practices so that all cities have better access to this information. The board thinks this is a very good idea and also thinks such a database is needed. This topic will be discussed in the board. Then it will also be necessary to see if and how financial resources can be found for this.
- The development of a new (digital) campaign to present the network and the work being done better and more to the outside world. This is also being discussed further by the board.

The board heard many good ideas and would like to thank the audience for their openness and wonderful ideas. A good foundation has been laid for the coming year.